



ECUADOR BY THE NUMBERS:

- Number of currently active volcanoes: 3
- Number of potentially active volcanoes: 30
- Number of extinct volcanoes: 250
- Average eruption of Volcano Cotopaxi: every 120 years.
- Time since last Cotopaxi eruption: 133 years ago (1877)

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American Citizen Services

U.S. Embassy • Quito, Ecuador

ISSUE 1

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Welcome from Ambassador Heather Hodges

Welcome to this first edition of our new American Citizens Services newsletter. Whether you are a retiree in one of Ecuador's beautiful colonial cities such as Cotacachi or Cuenca, or simply spending a few weeks here to climb Volcano Cotopaxi, go birding or explore some of the country's incredible ecological diversity, we hope that you will keep the U.S. Embassy in mind if

you find yourself in need of assistance. I also hope that you enjoy Ecuador as much as I have in my two years here as Ambassador.

In the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy, our biggest priority is the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens in Ecuador. We hope that you will find this newsletter a useful tool to keep up-to-date on issues and information con-

cerning U.S. citizens in Ecuador and what services we can offer you. We also hope that you will keep in touch with us through our Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. More information is available in this issue.

Enjoy Ecuador!

Ambassador Heather Hodges

Embassy Dedicates New Science Center in Tena

Ambassador Heather Hodges inaugurated a Science Center in the Parque Amazónico de la Isla in Tena on November 23. The Science Center was funded with \$50,000 from the Embassy for books, magazines, DVDs, computers and other materials. The Center is now open to the public for research and study, and will also be the site of future programming related to science education. The Embassy worked

with Marcelo Carrera, the park director and a former participant in a U.S. government

sponsored exchange program on environmental education, to create the Center.

The Department of State is using Science Centers to expand scientific cooperation throughout the region. The U.S. Embassy in Chile recently created the Science Center in an American Corner in 2005. Since then, the program has extended to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Trinidad, Uruguay and now, Ecuador.



Young students in Tena

New Country Specific Information for Ecuador

Every year, the Department of State updates its Country Specific Information (CSI) for Ecuador. The CSI is available for nearly all countries in the world and offers an in-depth look at a country's laws, trends in crime, areas of instability as well as entry and exit requirements. The CSI for Ecuador offers many things to keep in mind when traveling throughout the country.



U.S. Department of State

The CSI for Ecuador was recently updated. For the full report on Ecuador, please visit the Department of State's travel page: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1106.html.

"The CSI is available for nearly all countries in the world and offers an in-depth look at a country's laws, trends in crime, areas of instability as well as entry and exit requirements."

Foreign Service Exam Planned at Embassy

The U.S. Embassy in Quito will be offering the written portion of the Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT) in February 2011.

The test will be held from February 5 to the 12 with each test taking approximately three and a half hours. Only American citizens are eligible to take the FSOT.

Upcoming deadlines:

- Monday, January 3, 2011: ACT begins to invite applicants (on a staggered basis, according to career track) to schedule at overseas locations.
- Monday, January 24, 2011 (at 9:00 AM CST): Last date for candidates intending to test overseas to submit completed registration

forms.

- Friday, January 28, 2011 (at 9:00 AM CST): Deadline for candidates to schedule test seats at overseas sites. Please schedule your seat early as slots can fill up quickly.

For more information, or to register for the FSOT, please visit: <http://careers.state.gov/>

Are You a "Smart" Traveler?

The Department of State has a new program that allows travelers to stay up-to-date on information regarding traveling and living in Ecuador.

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

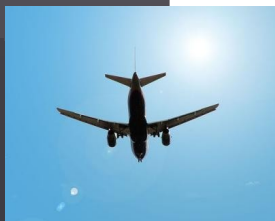
allows you to register and update your contact information on the internet at any time, making it easier for you to keep your information current and add new trips to other countries as they are scheduled.

Enrolling is voluntary and free. The information you

submit is protected by privacy laws and the Embassy will not release any information to other private or government entities without your authorization.

To sign-up for STEP, please go to: <http://www.travel.state.gov/>.

Enrolling in the "STEP" Program can help Embassies notify you in case of emergency.



Consul General's Corner - From CG Jennifer Savage

The holidays are a poignant reminder of "home." In this job, you're often overseas for the holidays, but it's a joy to learn about local traditions. On my first posting, in Haiti, the Christmas trees were mostly scavenged branches set in cement. With lights they were truly reminiscent of the woods after an ice-storm back home – a surreal association in the tropical heat of Haiti. Gifts, even the smallest of found items, or the last of someone's possessions, are important in Haiti, and the generosity of this proud people is never more touching.

In my post in Vietnam, a Buddhist country, the worldwide commercialism of Christmas was clear. The busi-

nesses were all fully decorated, and I sat on the lap of a Santa with Vietnamese eyes and the fullest real white Santa beard I had ever seen! New Year's Eve gets only a nod in Vietnam (although with 50% of the population under 30, it is a big hit in the night clubs), while the Lunar New Year gets a full week of spectacular celebration (to include kumquat or peach blossom trees decorated much like western Christmas trees).

Here in Ecuador, New Year's Eve is the true stand-out for me. Mourning the passing of the old year is a touching reminder of so many of life's passages. I love the eulogies and the "widows." My favorite moment last year was watching my 15 year old son

- full of teenage angst - surrounded by a group of "widows" who were kissing his cheek while he fumbled for a few pennies and nickels.

Whether you spend the holidays this year in your home-away-from-home, or surrounded by the sights and sounds familiar to you since childhood, may the season be joyful and may you celebrate with friends and loved ones. Happy Holidays and farewell to 2010! I'll be burning the effigy of Baron Samedi, the Haitian Voodoo image of the devil who is thought to be responsible for both the earthquake and cholera.

"The eruption of Tungurahua in early December is a reminder of how quickly a volcanic eruption can happen."

Tungurahua and Preparing for Natural Disasters



Volcano Tungurahua erupting near Baños.

Because of the high potential for earthquakes and volcanoes in Ecuador, it is important to be

prepared when a natural disaster strikes.

Ecuador has 30 potentially active volcanoes, including three currently erupting. If a volcano or earthquake occurs, your life could be in danger due to fumes, ash, falling debris, lava, mud or gas flows. You could also be affected by failures of transportation, water, communications, and power

systems. In the case of a volcanic eruption, your flight in or out of Ecuador might be cancelled due to a temporary closure from ash fall.

Further information is available in Spanish from the Ecuadorian Geophysical Institute at: www.igepn.edu.ec/ and at the ACS Quito website: <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov/security-and-safety/disaster->

Contact Us

The telephone number for American Citizen Service inquiries is **(011 593-2) 398-5000**. Public call-in hours are Monday through Thursday 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. and Friday 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. For after-hours emergencies, call **(011 593-2) 398-5200**.

ADDRESS: Avigiras E12-170 y Eloy Alfaro

EMAIL: ACSQuito@state.gov

Bureau of Consular Affairs: Secure Borders, Open Doors"

Embassy website: <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov>



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